

OCT 16 1990

READINGS BOOKLET



GRADE 9
ACHIEVEMENT TEST

English Language Arts
Part B: Reading

June 1990

Alberta
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 9 ACHIEVEMENT TEST
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Part B: Reading

READINGS BOOKLET

Part B of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test has 2 BOOKLETS:

The READINGS BOOKLET contains 8 reading selections.

The QUESTIONS BOOKLET contains 3 visuals and 65 questions.

**BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A READINGS BOOKLET, A QUESTIONS BOOKLET,
AND AN ANSWER SHEET.**

NOTE:

The INSTRUCTIONS for completing the test are included in the QUESTIONS BOOKLET.

JUNE 1990

- I. Read "Ultimate Construction" and answer questions 1 to 7 from your Questions Booklet.

ULTIMATE CONSTRUCTION

The shifting sands moved over the face of the Earth and would soon engulf it.

- For millennia now the oceans had been dry and the last tide had washed against the unending shore. The Earth was old. Its heart was cold, its skin dry and wrinkled with encroaching dust. Like a living thing, the sands multiplied, wombed in the deserts where navies once sailed.

- The death of moisture meant the death of man. A human being is not watertight: his vital juices evaporate like water from an unglazed pitcher. One by one, and then tribe by tribe and nation by nation, man disappeared as magically as he had come. His bones were powdered by the moving grit, his mineral salts dissolved into the sand.

Yet for a long time he managed to postpone his final extinction. With every technological device at his command, he fought off the deserts in a losing battle that was not lost for centuries.

- Now the battle was almost over. The old pastures, the woodlands, the hills, even the regions of ice at either pole — all were covered by the sand. All the works of man, his cities, roads and bridges, were engulfed by the dunes. Every insect, bird and animal lay sleeping under that treacherous yellow blanket. Only in one last valley, in one last house, did one last spark of life survive.

- The Last Man on Earth came out of his door and stood regarding the scene. His valley was small and shallow, and completely ringed round the top with glass walls. This morning there was something new to see: the sand had arrived.

- The sand pressed and surged against the glass like a living thing, tawnier and more terrible than lions. It rose and spread round the invisible obstacle. It could be heard whispering against the glass, trying to get in.

- The glass cracked. Breaking under the pressure behind it, a whole section of it fell inward. At once a great arm of yellow sand reached into the valley and spread its fingers around the house. More followed, and more behind that, until a great wedge sliding in from the rear buried the back of the house up to its eaves.

Without revealing any great emotion, the Last Man on Earth watched this invasion from the front garden. Over the lawn at his feet spread the tide, looking golden and soft and almost inviting. It seemed harmless; it was irresistible.

- So little time now remained. There was one last thing the Last Man could do. Turning, he ran through the sand that lay ankle-deep over the porch and hurried into the house to find a bucket and a spade.

A moment later he emerged triumphant. The Last Man on Earth was only six years old. He started to build a sandcastle.

C. C. Shackleton

II. Read "Silence Is Obsolete" and answer questions 8 to 12 from your Questions Booklet.



SILENCE IS OBSOLETE

Silence is obsolete, that thick silence
Soft as snow or a slow bird's wing
Spread over the world, which I remember
From the days of a farm childhood
5 When cars did not run on the winter roads
And we sat in the snow-dark house
Without radio or television or telephone
In a family not given to chat,
Each wrapped around in the folds of his own thought,
10 Deep and thick as wool.

Awakening to the roar of Hondas
Or my neighbour playing his transistor in the bath
Through the too-thin walls of the apartment building,
I regret that we have abolished silence.
15 Now, although we may perhaps be lonely,
We are never really alone,
And therefore never perfectly together.

Elizabeth Brewster

III. Read the excerpt from *So We Got Married* and answer questions 13 to 20 from your Questions Booklet.

from SO WE GOT MARRIED

Farming in Western Canada at the turn of the century required long hours of physical labor from both men and women. It was a hard life that often demanded practical solutions to difficult problems.

My brother, Dan, came out early. We're from Parry Sound, Ontario, and the farming was hard there. When he bought a farm south of Russell, Manitoba, it was just a farm. A house, a poplar pole barn, and not much more and the family had no stock. They really weren't farmers and were going to Edson, Alberta, which was supposed to be a new and booming town. The man thought that his old trade of shoemaker would be good. Cobblers don't make farmers, remember that.

My brother, sure, he was a crab, as we'd say. Fifteen years older than I was, but he did get himself a wife. By advertisement. Oh, it was done a lot in them years. There were newspapers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and he put in this advertisement and got himself a wife, and in four years they had two youngsters.

My brother wrote me to come out and get my roots down in this district, but he expected me to work for nothing. It was no life, so I went into town and worked at one of the livery barns.

Then Dan got all tangled up in a four-horse team and a breaking plow and that killed him.

We had the funeral and it was put on by Dan's lodge, all the men. It was held on a Sunday. Mary said, after all, it was no time to take a day off for a funeral.

I drove Mary home. There was cows to milk so I did the barn work and then I went up to the house. I just put the milk into the pig trough and what was left I just threw away. You see, something was on my mind.

I went to the house and I asked Mary what her plans were. I asked her if she was going to leave the farm and she said, "Where would I go?" She had been a governess or lady companion or both in Winnipeg for the Stratton family, but what could she do with two little kiddies?

So we had supper that night and when the kids were in bed I said that the best thing would be if I married her. I remember her saying, "Yes, I've been thinking that myself. We're the same age. Dan was too old for me and I think we can make it work. There's no reason why not. We shouldn't let Dan's death stop us, because there's this farm to run and I'd rather have people talking about our marriage any way they want to than have them talking behind my back about you living here and working on the farm." That's not really what she said but that's what she meant.

Next morning after chores I hitched up and we drove into town and got married. Nobody said anything.

Accidents happened. A woman couldn't be left on a farm alone and there were a lot of weddings, quick-like. Even then, in the city, it wouldn't be done, but out in the bush, you just made up another set of rules and that's the way it was.

Barry Broadfoot

V. Read the excerpt from *The Novitiate* and answer questions 22 to 30 from your Questions Booklet.

from THE NOVITIATE

This story takes place in a small Canadian prairie community in the 1940s. From time to time, the government would offer a small amount of money to people who helped control pests such as gophers. At that time, this practice was not only common but generally accepted. Some people today feel strongly that such practices are wrong because animals are being killed needlessly; however, others feel that such controls are necessary.

He took her with him, grudgingly, because his mother had said sharply, "Well, what if Stewie Grant can't go! Take your sister. I won't have you complaining under my feet all Saturday."

5 She trotted at his heels, back a pace, as was respectful. The paper bag was in his knapsack, but he let her carry the ball of string.

She dawdled deliberately in order to fill her heart with his fury if she could not fill it with his favor.

10 He said politely, as though he were speaking to somebody else's sister, "We ought to get lots of gophers today. It's a good day for gophers." And then the topic enthralled him, and he went on with eagerness, forgetting. "Stewie Grant made \$3.48 with his gopher tails last month. You get three cents bounty for every tail. They eat the wheat. I figure if I make twelve dollars, I'll buy Bob Phillip's bike. His brother's getting him a new one."

15 "Judy Craig has a pet gopher," she said. "It lives under their front steps. It sits up and begs for nuts."

"Sure." He dismissed the subject. "The way I figure, a guy needs a bike. Bob Phillip gets to deliver handbills all the time on account of he's got a bike."

20 A gopher stood on tiptoe and watched them. "Stewie Grant got twenty-one gophers last Saturday. He uses twine. But I think twine slips. All right if you grab him hard the first time, but they're tricky. They fight."

The gopher slid down the hill. He whistled.

"Judy Craig's gopher whistles like that," she told him. "He lets her scratch his head. He's exactly like a little dog."

25 "I figure we ought to get thirty gophers today anyways," he said. "It's early yet."

"You'd better stay with me the first time and see how it's done," he told her.

"This one will do," he said.

30 He made a sliding loop in the string and set it close around the hole. "Not too close, though," he warned, "or he'll see it and dodge back." He led her back from the hole and they lay flat on the grass. "Away from him, the way the wind is moving," he explained, "so he won't smell you."

"Judy Craig's gopher has little hands just like a monkey," she said. "He sits on her shoe and holds nuts in his hands and eats them."

35 "Don't talk," he said. "You'll scare him."

Her leg was cramped and she wanted to move it, but she didn't. She looked at him and his eyes were steady on the gopher hole and she belonged beside him

Continued

on the grass and was very happy.

40 "Got him!" He was shouting. She saw it then, and it was tiny, like Judy Craig's gopher, and rearing back with its tiny paws at the loop on its neck.

He screamed, "Stay back!" And she stood like a rock while he played the string into his hand and the little animal recoiled from him in terror, but fury, too, with its tiny teeth snarling in the sun.

45 And then he had swung it in a wide arc and it thudded on the ground, and struggled, and thudded again.

She did not move, but her stomach turned, and she thought she must lie on the grass and be sick.

"Why did you kill it?" she whispered, after a long minute. "Stewie Grant doesn't kill his, he just takes their tails and lets them go."

50 "That's cheating." He knelt on the grass and removed the tail. It came off easily, just a twitch. He was full of success. "I told you it would be a good day. Three cents already." He spoke briskly. "Now I'm going to set you up with a snare of your own." She went behind him, stumbling. She did not look at the dead gopher, but her body felt it through the ground.

55 He was expert now, talking in whispers. He found a new gopher hole, set the noose about it, drew her down-wind.

"Just sit tight. Let him get well out of the hole before you pull, but not too far or he'll get away. And bring him over to me when you get him. Just lead him on the string. I'll take the tails." He was excited, his eyes were pinpointed 60 with pleasure, sheer intoxication.

She was all by herself then, with the string in her hand. She could still feel the dead gopher in her body, and her throat was so tight that it seemed to stop her breath. She did not want to cry, but her eyes were dull. They could hardly see her brother, where he walked gaily on the grass.

65 She lay without moving for a long time. Her chest hurt, and her mind went running, for an instant, to Judy Craig's gopher, and she could see Judy scratching it behind the ear, and the way it leaned on Judy's hand. Then she did not think of that any more.

70 She felt a stir on her string, and her eyes saw the gopher nosing out of his hole, and her hand yanked. But he was gone, dodging back to safety. She had pulled too soon.

She got up and draped the noose carefully once more about the hole. She went down-wind and lay still.

75 He came up slowly the next time, very slowly and suspiciously, turning his head around, but not seeing her, and coming up higher, a little higher, till his tiny face was clear of the ground and his paws were tiny hands on the grass. She yanked then, and she had him, high and hard; and he was a wild thing, darting and fighting on the end of her line.

80 She stood shaking on her feet and looked down at him. He was at bay, turned to face her, a little gray animal with big teeth like Thumper the Rabbit, but snarling. Not as long as her foot, and in terror and hating her, with his little brown hands fighting the noose at his neck.

85 She was alone and crying and hated; but far down the grass she saw her brother, and he lifted his arm to her and waved, in the urgent friendship of this one afternoon.

He was her dear companion, and she was running toward him in wild, sad ecstasy, dragging her sacrifice behind her.

Jean Howarth

VII. Read “Mrs. Reece Laughs” and answer questions 33 to 41 from your Questions Booklet.

MRS. REECE LAUGHS

- Laughter, with us, is no great undertaking;
A sudden wave that breaks and dies in breaking.
Laughter with Mrs. Reece is much less simple:
It germinates, it spreads, dimple by dimple,
5 From small beginnings, things of easy girth,
To formidable redundancies of mirth.
Clusters of subterranean chuckles rise,
And presently the circles of her eyes
Close into slits, and all the woman heaves
10 As a great elm with all its mound of leaves
Wallows before the storm. From hidden sources
A mustering of blind volcanic forces
Takes her and shakes her till she sobs and gapes.
Then all that load of bottled mirth escapes
15 In one wild crow, a lifting of huge hands,
And creaking stays, a visage that expands
In scarlet ridge and furrow. Thence collapse,
A hanging head, a feeble hand that flaps
An apron-end to stir an air and waft
20 A streaming face And Mrs. Reece has laughed.

Martin Armstrong

VIII. Read "I Knew How a Grizzly Felt" and answer questions 42 to 49 from your Questions Booklet.

I KNEW HOW A GRIZZLY FELT

For me, foothills' spring is the loveliest of all springs. Even more than the Prairie springs of my early childhood, it seems to explode one morning with all the surprise of first love. I recall one April morning of the year I lived on the Eden Valley Reserve on the eastern slope of the Rockies. I woke just as dawn
5 had begun to dilute the bedroom's darkness, and for several long moments I lay still and tried to identify the sound that had wakened me.

It came again, muffled, like a rubber ball bouncing down from step to step to step, a stubborn dribble beat that had finally worn through the edge of my sleep with placeless urgency. Somewhere outside the cabin a ruffed grouse was
10 drumming out again and again its invitation to join the living whole. Spring — actual spring, by God! No more brittle weeks below zero with hip drifts on the flats; no chill cling to every breath deeply drawn — mist exhaling from mouth and nostrils like ectoplasmic clouds in photographs.

When I stepped outside the cabin, I wasn't emotionally ready for the chinook
15 that stirred over my cheek and breathed compassion through the inner self that had flinched and winced for months from the alienating stun of foothills' winter. Full reprieve that smelled of leaf mould and wet earth and the menthol of spruce, bitter with the iodine edge of willow smoke lifting from old John Dixon's stove pipe. I knew how a grizzly felt, stepping out of a dark winter nest and into total
20 light, stomach shrunk fist-small from long winter hibernation. I was a grizzly, possessed by a grouse drumming life inside me, membrane throat back flushed with blood, inflating, expanding incredibly more within me.

The chinook breath was strong; I could feel the fresh delight of it against my forehead. Today was a fair spring day to swing the children outside. For five
25 months under the weight of snow the spruce branches had pointed down to frozen earth. Released from pressure now they slanted upwards, dark finger tips indicating blue spring sky, bud froth tinting the river willows, the valley and surging hills around, committed to green.

At recess, Sarah Ear, a little grade-one-er, brought me a fistful of shooting
30 stars. I recognized it as a gift of contrition for chewing snooze* in reading period earlier in the morning. I also recognized it as a gift of spring.

*tobacco



W.O. Mitchell

IX. Read "Media Menace" and answer questions 50 to 57 from your Questions Booklet.

from MEDIA MENACE

SETTING: *A cluttered bedroom in a medium-sized apartment. The room contains two radios, stereo phonograph equipment, and a small printing press. Pages ripped from magazines are scattered on the floor. A large television screen is built into the wall facing the audience. The other walls are covered with photographs and posters which were printed on the press. Headlines on some of the posters read: "There is more to know than what you read in the papers"; "Don't be a Media-Maniac"; and "Create your own image; don't follow theirs." In one corner of the room is a different type of poster, bearing a photograph of a teenager and the words, "WANTED: Chris Borden — For Subverting the Public Good."*

The time is early morning. Chris, who is up and working at the printing press, flicks on the television. Chris is approximately 16 years old; he's sloppily dressed and seems agitated. A well-dressed, cheerful announcer appears on the TV screen.



- 5 **TV ANNOUNCER:** Good morning, viewers. It's a beautiful morning. Have you brightened your teeth yet today? Remember, a bright smile and a bright mind go hand in hand. Eight out of ten popular people will be brushing their teeth in the next five minutes. I'm sure you want to be one of them. This morning's "Media Message" can be found in the current issue of *Today Magazine*. Please turn to page 42 and read along with Den Longworth. (CHRIS stares angrily at the TV screen, while offstage the voices of CHRIS' PARENTS

Continued

can be heard reading along with LONGWORTH who has appeared on the screen.)

10 **LONGWORTH and PARENTS:** The world has made tremendous advancements in the past 50 years. We have established instant communication through the inventions of radio and television. No one can deny how much these have improved our lives. We can be entertained, informed, and instructed without ever having to leave our rooms. All we need to do is pay attention. The
15 lives of all people have been brought closer together, and we have learned the lasting value of living up to the proper image. What — (*CHRIS turns off the TV, cutting off LONGWORTH's voice. Offstage PARENTS can be heard completing the reading.*)

PARENTS: . . . the development of the mass media has meant and continues to mean to us is a fuller, more enjoyable life, a life our ancestors could only dream about.

CHRIS (*Angrily*): Proper image! That's all they think people are — just images. Are your teeth the right brightness? Are your clothes the latest style? How about your mouthwash? The way your hair is combed? Is your soft drink
25 "real"? No, none of it's real — least of all you, Den Longworth. I think someone just dreamed you up, filled you with batteries and transistors, and told you to run everybody's life. But not mine! (*CHRIS' PARENTS appear in the doorway.*)

MOTHER: Oh, I see you're up, Chris. You arrived home so late last night, I
30 thought you'd still be sleeping. Have you brightened your teeth yet? I was just on the way to the bathroom. It's a beautiful morning.

CHRIS: I really hadn't noticed. I've been busy trying to fix the press.

FATHER: That press is going to get us all in trouble. You know, just letting you stay in the house is dangerous for all of us, but you insist upon creating
35 more problems. I saw a story just like this on *Kozek* a few weeks ago, and the ending was awfully sad.

CHRIS: Dad, I wish you'd realize that there is a real world outside of the TV screen — a world they're not telling us the truth about on TV or in the papers and magazines. People used to be able to recognize that reality, but
40 they're more brainwashed now. All that seems important is having the proper image.

FATHER: No one is saying that there aren't some things wrong with the media, but no one can deny how much they have improved our lives. Maybe newspapers and TV do try to simplify things too much sometimes —

45 **CHRIS** (*Intensely*): Simplify? They try to make everything fit into pat little formulas. There are only good people and bad people. Life is shown as either great tragedies or corny comedies. I don't need an advice columnist telling me how to act or some singer telling me what love is or a newsman telling me how to interpret what the President just said. People don't realize that facts in the
50 media aren't always pure facts; a lot has been changed or left out entirely. What I want to know is the truth, then I'll decide what's important to me.

MOTHER: But all people aren't able or don't want to think for themselves like you do.

CHRIS: But they deserve the right to *be* themselves, don't they?

55 **FATHER:** I don't know what good it does to argue with you. You have to realize that many people think you're a criminal. People believe in their media images, and I'm one of those people. I want to know when my thoughts are

Continued

60 correct and consistent with other people's. You can't keep subverting the public good by trying to tear down the tremendous advancements of the past 50 years. The police don't suspect you've come home, or at least they won't raid us, because we've put in a new TV screen and renewed our subscription to *Today Magazine* for another five years. But one more of your pamphlets, and we are all going to be in trouble.

65 **MOTHER:** Speaking of trouble — we've had some problems with robberies in the neighborhood lately, so we've installed a new media alarm. The only way to get into the apartment from the hallway or through the door that leads to the stairs is to use a special password. Our private password is announced every five minutes on Channel 471. An alarm goes off if anyone tries to open either door without saying the password, and the person is trapped in
70 the hallway until the police arrive. Isn't that a marvelous invention? I saw it advertised and knew we just had to have one. (*Suddenly concerned*) But if you hear the alarm go off, Chris, you'd better hide before the police get here.

75 **CHRIS:** I don't have time for hiding. There is so much that needs to be done to help people open their eyes and ears.

FATHER: I don't know what you're planning on doing, but we don't want any trouble in the house. Our lives haven't been the same since your picture first appeared in the paper. In one newspaper the caption under your picture was "Hate this person." We received more than 10,000 threatening letters in one
80 week.

MOTHER: Why can't you be more like the kids on the cover of last week's *In The Know Magazine*? You know, you ought to read it. It lists all the latest fashions, records, viewing habits, and slang of teenagers. You've been away for a while, and a lot has probably changed.

85 **FATHER** (*Picking up a remote control box from a table beside the bed*): I think I'll turn on the radio and catch the latest news.

CHRIS (*Sarcastically, voice rising*): Don't you know what the latest news is? It's that everyone is becoming a "media maniac." We don't know how to think unless we read an editorial. We don't know how to dress without looking at
90 magazine ads. We don't even know which media to tune in to — whether it should be the radio, television, a movie, or a book — until we get the word from a barrage of know-it-all critics!

FATHER: You know, you're rushing around here screaming about how our thoughts are controlled, but all you really seem to want is for us to think the way
95 you do. Aren't you trying to control us, too?

CHRIS (*Turning back toward PARENTS*): I'm sorry I've been yelling, but I'm so afraid that we're losing touch with reality. I've been hiding out alone in a house outside the city and wandering around town for more than six months. I've read a few newspapers and seen some magazines, but mostly I've been
100 trying to think about the lives we're living here. And they aren't our lives. When do we get a chance to say who we are, what we want? Who asks us what TV show we like before they put it on the air or take it off? Who asks us if we like the new dress styles or if we're tired of last year's clothes? Who cares if we hate violence in movies or the way they portray love? The
105 media don't reflect us. They're trying to make us reflect their images.

FATHER: But don't you understand, Chris? We're happy. (*CHRIS, taken by surprise, stares at PARENTS for a few seconds, then turns away, speechless.*)

Michael Goodman

- X. Read the excerpt from *Atlantic Ordeal* and answer questions 58 to 63 from your Questions Booklet.

from ATLANTIC ORDEAL

In 1940 Mary Cornish, an escort travelling with English children, found herself in a lifeboat with six boys and forty men after their ship was torpedoed.

After nightfall another of the boys became delirious. His feet were so painful that he could not bear to have them touched. As the night wore on he became obsessed with the fear of going mad. Sometimes he screamed horribly and shouted: "I'm mad, I'm going mad, I *know* I'm going mad."

- 5 Mary Cornish tried to calm him, but if anyone touched him, he shouted all the more. Father Sullivan said in French:

"This boy is dying of thirst."

"The others aren't. He must hang on somehow."

- 10 There was one service that the priest alone could perform. He knelt beside the boy and offered prayers for his soul. The others could not understand the rapid Latin phrases, but the low-voiced words had a soothing effect.

There was a disturbance . . . and then the gunner appeared. He took in the situation at a glance: the boy's exposed legs and feet — he had kicked off the blanket — the kneeling priest, and the solemn atmosphere.

- 15 "What's going on here *now*?" he demanded. "What's wrong with the poor little blighter?"

The boy, croaking like a frog, cried out for water.

"Water?" the gunner said. "Is *that* all? Of course you want water; we all do. You'll get some in the morning."

- 20 The boy only cried out again for water.

"Now you forget about it," the gunner commanded. "You'll have plenty of water when we're picked up, and that won't be long now. Is *that* all that's wrong with you?"

"My feet are cold," the boy answered weakly.

- 25 The gunner snorted triumphantly and glared at the escorts. "Huh! So your feet are cold. That's a nice way to look after a kid. . . ."

The cadet took his coat off to give to the boy, and the gunner wrapped it round the sick boy's feet and tucked it in.

"There. Any better?" he demanded.

- 30 "My feet are still cold."

"No, they're not," the gunner said firmly. "They're wrapped up properly now and they'll be warm as toast in half a jiffy. Now, are your feet warm?"

"My feet —" the boy began.

- 35 "Don't let me hear another sound out of you till morning," the gunner said fiercely. "No more of this yelling out. Now — *are your feet warm*?"

"Yes," the boy whispered feebly.

"Then you'll be all right till the morning."

- 40 He went off, muttering under his breath about boys with cold feet, women who didn't know how to look after kids, and the respective merits of saying prayers and keeping children warm. His methods were effective; the boy did not scream anymore and he gradually quieted down.

Elsbeth Huxley

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